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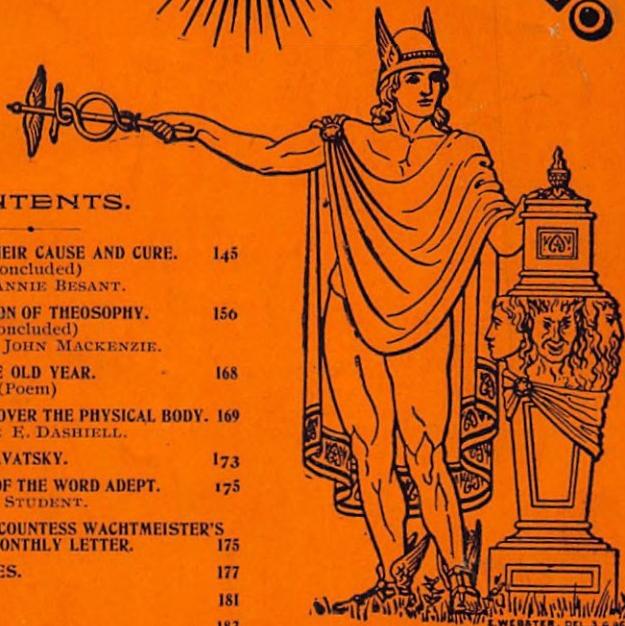
January, 1898.

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MERCURY

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E. WEBSTER, DEL. J. G. B.

DEVOTED TO
**THE STUDY OF THEOSOPHY, ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY,
THE OCCULT SCIENCES AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.**

ISSUED MONTHLY.

WILLIAM JOHN WALTERS,

Managing Editor.

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The Editors will endeavor to answer satisfactory, but of necessity briefly, any question addressed to them in spirit of serious enquiry, if pertaining to the subjects to which MERCURY is devoted.

Communications for the T. S. Echoes and Forum Departments should be in the hands of the Editors by the 20th of each month if intended for the following month's issue.

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All Editorial Correspondence and Books for Review should be addressed to

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PALACE HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.



Satyan Nasti Paro Dharmah.

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To form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color.

To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.

To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.

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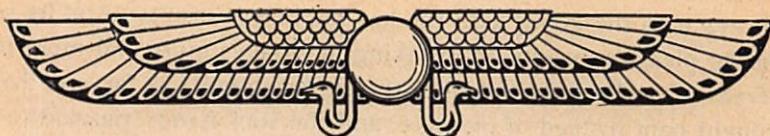
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VOL. IV. No. 5. SAN FRANCISCO, CAL. JANUARY, 1898.

SORROW AND EVIL, THEIR CAUSE AND CURE.

(Continued from December Number.)

✓ The problem to be solved is this: How to develop a will that is free as the will of God, and yet is always determined to the highest and to the best because it is guided by universal knowledge and motived by universal love. A difficult problem. The will is to be free, yet always to choose the best. How can it learn such a lesson?

The problem is solved in this way. I said that nature held out her hands full of gifts. The soul takes whatever comes in its way, according to its fancy, its desires, its opportunities, but to everything it takes the law joins the result that comes from the taking. It may choose what it likes, but in choosing it must take the whole of its choice. The results of what it takes belong to it, and none shall interfere with the working out of those results. It may choose whatever attracts it. Out of all the infinite treasures of nature the soul may take what it will, but it must also take the results of that choice. It shall not escape from them, be they pleasant or painful. It shall not get away from them, bring they sorrow or joy. It shall not be able to shake them off, though, when it realizes the results it would give anything to have chosen otherwise. It shall live in the world of law, and by the law it shall gradually learn knowledge. Thus in the world nature offers it food; it grasps food and delights in it; its joy is in harmony

with the natural order and pleasure results from its choice, for where the law is followed there is harmony, evolution, progress. Always with the going with the law happiness results. And its so finding pleasure results from taking food takes more and more to increase the pleasure, and finds that it has gone too far and has brought pain instead of pleasure, and the soul stands puzzled before the strange result that, that which gave it pleasure first gives pain afterwards, and it realizes two possibilities, pleasure and pain, and realizing both it learns to distinguish. Without change there could be no growth of mind, for the mind can only think by difference and it only realizes an object by the characteristics which it discerns in that object.

Pleasure and pain as a result of experience: The soul registers that and remembers. Over and over again the soul goes through these experiences; life after life it passes through them till there is a dawning conscience, a dawning moral sense, a dawning mental faculty, and when the soul has reached the stage at which the mental faculty distinguishes between object and object, when it has learned to know this subserves my growth and that delays me; this gives me health and that gives me disease, this increases my powers and that diminishes them, then the soul is beginning for the first time to learn the difference between right and wrong, for all is right that helps forward the evolution of the soul, and all is wrong that retards the evolution of the soul; and it is only when the experience has been gained, the result has been registered and when it has been found that a certain experience clogs instead of helping it onward, it is only then that the experience becomes evil, because it begins to retard instead of quickening the progress of the soul.

Let me take an illustration to make this clear. We are all agreed that murder is wrong, within certain limitations of course. We have reached a point at which we recognize that we must not murder each other. Looking back thousands, millions of years, to the time when our souls were young, at that time we knew nothing about murder, had no experience of it at all. Some one came in our way, frustrated our object; we struck at that person who came in the way of our will; he fell dead. Had we committed a crime? Will you be surprised if I say no? At that stage we

were incapable of committing a crime; we did not know; we did not understand. All that we realized was an obstacle in our path and struck it out of the way to reach the object of our desire; but we had done a wrong though we did not know it and the law asserted itself; it brought us trouble, trouble with the relatives of the man we had killed, trouble perhaps if he was a friend and we had lost our friend by giving away to the passion of the moment and we learned by the stern touch of experience that that act brought sorrow in its wake. Thus life after life we learned that we must not slay those who were near to us, and after many more lives we learned that we must not slay anybody within the limit of our own tribe; and after more lives yet we learned that we must not slay anybody within the limit of our own nation. That stage most of us have reached at the present day, but we are still in the very elementary stage of morality as far as the learning of the evil of murder is concerned. We do not recognize it when it is done on people outside our own nation provided it is done on a large enough scale. So that we think murder is wrong if it is done on a man of our own nation as an individual, but not wrong when it is done on a man of other nations in a wholesale fashion, and then we call it war and glory and never mark it with the ugly name of murder; but that is a very elementary stage in regard to the evil of killing. It shows that we have only climbed a very little way up the ladder of the knowledge of good and of evil. Some of us have climbed further and we know that murder is wrong though it be called war. It is just as wrong done by a man in a red coat as by a man in a smock-frock, just as wrong when it is done on a man of another nation, as when it is done on a man of our own; just as wrong when it is done under the name of glory, as when it is done under the name of private hatred; just as wrong when we do it because as a nation we covet another nation's property, as when as an individual we do it because we covet another man's pocket contents. But the popular view has not reached that point yet; does not yet see murder to be wrong when done wholesale and nationally; much less have we reached that point that regards murder as wrong when we come to deal with the non-human creatures, and yet they also have had the sacredness of life as all of us will know a million or two years hence if not before. After a little time we shall recognize it to be savage and barbarian

to kill the lower creatures as now we regard private murder to be savage and barbarian, and looking back at our own civilization as it is to-day from the vantage ground of thousands of years hence we shall see how degraded we were, how brutal, how evil, how shockingly barbarian that we murdered thousands of beautiful living creatures for the mere sake of satisfying our carnivorous instincts.

That is how evolution goes on, how the soul of man develops, and there are many of you to-day who do not recognize that as evil, who do not see that that is a crime, who do not realize that you are living on the results of murder, simply because the soul has not yet developed to that point. Presently you will recognize it.

Supposing that, recognizing it, you do what you know to be wrong, then you pull back the soul. There are many who commit murder to-day on other men and on animals who are not so terribly degraded as at first sight you might imagine. There are many soldiers who are not barbarians merely because they kill; they do not recognize it is wrong and criminal; therefore their souls are not much injured thereby. It shows that they are in a low state of evolution, but in that condition of evolution they are learning their lessons. They have not yet recognized that they are committing a crime, and as the essence of committing the crime is the knowledge by the doer that he is committing a crime those souls are not degraded by fighting as souls more highly evolved would be. They are rather gaining experience. They will suffer. When they pass out of the body they will find themselves surrounded with those they have slain, and when those who have lived on the animals slaughtered for their satisfaction pass out of the body they will find all the astral world against them, antagonistic to them. They learn their lessons in this way. They learn by experience that it is wrong, and it is when that lesson is learned and the soul understands it that the repetition of the experience becomes an evil. Up to that stage it is an experience, not a crime.

Now, if you followed that line of thought, and recognized it in your own growth at the present time, you will gain a great light on the presence of evil in the world.

Evil is the choice by the soul of gratifying the lower nature at

the cost of the higher, in choosing a present pleasure knowing that it is against the law; taking anything that offers itself, conscious that in so doing it is delaying its own evolution. One of the slaughtermen, for instance, in Chicago, is not committing evil as I should be committing evil if I took the results of his action. He has not reached the point where he recognizes it as wrong. He is not degrading his soul. If I took what he provides by his murdering, I should be committing a crime, because knowing it to be wrong, recognizing it as degrading, understanding that in doing so I was sacrificing the higher to the lower, then I should be deliberately delaying the evolution of the soul and stooping to a stage out of which I have grown.

So with every other evil; so with every other form of sin; the moment a soul knows it to be wrong, that moment it becomes a degradation and an evil. Until that recognition has been made, that which is being done though against the law is a thing which the soul is experiencing by which it will learn the existence of the law.

Now, if you will realize that, you will find it a wonderful help to you in those times of trouble that come to almost all of us when some one who we love tenderly, some one with whom our very heartstrings are entwined, goes away from the path we know as right and plunges into sin. Take some young man, the hope, the joy of father and mother, think of the bitterness of grief that rends their hearts when their son plunges into evil, perhaps into dishonor and disgrace. What message must be brought to the broken-hearted parent in regard to that beloved son thus consumed with dishonor? The lesson of the soul. That soul is learning a terrible lesson which it refuses to learn in any other way. Brought up amid fair surroundings, taught by parent and by teacher, with the good set in front of it in all attractive colors, warned against evil and protected against it through childhood and on through youth, with the pleadings of a mother's love, with the pleadings of a father's experience, with everything to induce it to choose rightly, that soul has chosen wrongly. If that be so it needed that bitter lesson ere it would learn the evil of that course. If it would not learn by love, by pleading, by good training, by the gentlest education, by the love of father and of mother, by all the tender ties of home—if it refused to learn by those

and the passion nature was so vehement that the soul was carried away as by unbroken horses attached to a car, then the meaning is that the soul needed that lesson ere it would learn to choose the right; that choosing the wrong in despite of everything, choosing the wrong in face of all good influences, then nothing but the bitter scourge of pain can teach that soul to choose the right in all lives to come; and which is the better, that the soul should face that lesson learned, bitter as it is, experience it terrible as it is, and then for all lives to come rise above the possibility of the fall; or that, still desiring the evil, still longing for that experience that promises delight, the soul should miss the lesson and go ignorant on its way certain to fall when the temptation comes back again with less favorable circumstances surrounding the soul, often to fall with a deeper and more terrible fall if evolution has carried it further, if it has climbed higher with that weak spot left untouched within?

Those who are able to realize the long life of the soul can take even that bitterest pain of wrong doing by a beloved one with equanimity and with patience. They will not lose that soul; they will not in any fashion be separated from that soul. Let the lesson be learned. The soul will be the wiser and the ties will only be drawn closer in the future because that lesson has been learned and garnered in the experiences of the soul.

So that we say the world's evil is teaching first by experience and later by suffering the souls that will not learn in any other way. We realize it as a necessary stage and it loses its horror and its darkness.

Still further we begin to realize that the facing of evil makes us strong; that if that were not present in the world we could not grow; that if those temptations were not around us we could not develop, and that we should remain always children in virtue were it not for the struggles that make us gradually develop into spiritual athletes. Exercise is needed everywhere if any living thing is to grow, and the exercise which is struggling against difficulty is that which develops all that is strongest in the soul. Why, if you wanted to realize it even down on the physical plane see how great a luxury, how great a wealth, how having everything that could be desired—see how that injures the mental and moral fibre of any soul that is submitting to those conditions in

youth. It is far harder to withstand luxury than to withstand poverty. It is far harder not to be enervated by excess than it is not to grow under difficult and struggling conditions; and if you take the greatest men of any nation, whether they be great mentally or morally, you will find that they have encountered struggle, that by struggling they have grown strong, and that the calm serenity of a perfected manhood is the result of struggles against evil. Those have issued in the hardening of the muscles of the soul.

But I said that man must learn another principle as well as this of evolution if he was to realize the cause and the cure of sin. Remember the distinction drawn between form and life. Remember that the one is always growing and breaking; the other is eternally evolving and losing nothing it has gained. Man seeks happiness; he seeks to grasp the object he desires. He grasps the form; the form crumbles away after he has grasped it. He unites himself with the form; the form perishes; he has lost it. Follow in thought in a growing soul, a soul first seeks to satisfy itself by wealth; happiness is to be found in wealth; it follows wealth, it seeks wealth, gathers wealth, unites itself to wealth; it draws wealth in and holds it; it is to gain happiness by uniting itself with gold. It gains it. In the midst of the gold it is hungry and discontented and unsatisfied, and having given life to uniting itself with the object of its desire, it has the old age perhaps of a miser, isolated, miserable, lonely, and unloved. What a lesson for the soul, that that union did not give happiness, that that union was a mistaken union and could not bring satisfaction; and all those to-day who are seeking wealth, who think that in wealth is happiness, who toil early and late to be rich, who are struggling for it and who are living for it, who are spending their lives to unite themselves with gold—they will have their lesson, life after life. United with gold they will find unhappiness with the union; united with gold they will find discontent amid the treasure; united with gold they will find a dwarfed manhood unable to enjoy; encircled with glittering treasures they will learn by that bitter experience that to join themselves to gold was a mistake, to join themselves with wealth was a blunder.

And the soul seeks pleasure, seeks to grasp the object of its pleasure, perhaps in beauty, the outer beauty of form, and seeks

in man or in woman, attracted by the mere fair semblance outside, to gain possession and in that union find happiness. The union is attained; happiness is grasped; it crumbles, either by age, or sickness, or decay, or death. That beloved form disappears and he who had clung to the form finds his arms empty and misery succeeds upon that union.

And so as the soul grows it tries form after form, higher and higher as it evolves, and it joins itself to every kind of emotion and the emotion wearies it and it finds weariness instead of satisfaction; and then it tries intellect and art, literature and science, and exhausts itself in uniting itself to these higher objects yet, and in the end dissatisfaction, weariness and restlessness and the hunger of the soul ever returning, fed on stones instead of on bread. And so by countless lessons repeated life after life the soul finally learns that union with forms brings sorrow, union with external things brings grief; and then the soul begins to seek within the forms, begins to search within the forms.

What is this keen instinct in the soul that it ever sets it seeking union everywhere however mistaken in its search? It is because the Divine Life is within every form and the Divine Life is the attractive power though the soul only sees the form in which the life is clothed. The real attraction as magnet to iron is divinity within the outer object, and inasmuch as the spirit of man is divine, just as water seeks to rise to its own level and only at its own level has rest, so the spirit in man, divine and imprisoned in matter, seeks ever to rise to the divine which is of its own nature, and will never find rest until it finds its rest in God; but it is the Divine Life that is the magnet power that attracts it. It is the broken rays of the Self that are really the attractive power in everything no matter how poor and how base the form, and man in blindly grasping after objects, is following the impulse from within and is trying to find the Self under every form, only he clings to the form instead of piercing within it to the life.

How else should the soul learn its lesson save by the breaking of the forms? How should the soul have gone onward to seek the life if the form ever remained within its grasp? How should the soul ever find its deeper, its higher joys, unless disappointment broke it away from everything that is transitory, that changes? And so in love and in compassion the divine which is

alone eternal lets every form break within our grasp, and gradually we learn to look to the life, the life that is within the form, and joining ourselves to that we have found a place of happiness.

Think how that helps us in face of death. I love a friend. I do not love the body; that changes but my friend remains. I do not love the mere animal nature; that will perish; but my friend will last. I do not even cling with passionate attachment to the mind; that will break down at last; my friend will endure. I learn to love my friend himself and not the outer garment that he wears. I learn to recognize the God in him, and joining myself to that I learn to rejoice in all that in the growth of experience has given to him his individual image of Deity, and recognizing that he has taken all that into the divine with him, has grown by it, increased by it, developed by it, I embrace in my friend the Life that never perishes.

What matters it then to me that death has stricken away the body? Death loses its sting, it loses its power, it can no longer break our hearts when we know that our loved ones are ours to all eternity, that we are bound to them by the ties of the one Self which is eternal and changeless; that that which we love is the gold in them that is purified in the fire and when the fire is over the pure gold will remain. Out of that we forge the chains of our love; out of that we weld the links of our affection, and loving the divinity that is our friend, the divine man that is evolved within him, death becomes only an incident in the unending life and fails any longer to pierce the heart which is joined to the undying, which is beyond the reach of death.

And so with every other sorrow that life may bring. Does a misunderstanding arise between us and a friend? Has the brain given rise to misconception and the tongue misled and made misunderstanding? Never mind. What we love in our friend is the immortal man and that cannot be misunderstood, that cannot be misled, that remains forever though mistakes may cloud the lower life until the end of the physical existence. We shall find our friend again when the body is stricken off and in the higher world the misunderstandings will have vanished. They belong to the transitory and not to the eternal within us. Thus realizing we find that all we can lose is the changing; all that we can lose is the impermanent; and choosing the eternal, resting ourselves on that

rock, we find ourselves peaceful and immovable, above the sorrows of the world.

When shall sorrow have its ending? The moment its lessons are learned. When shall evil find its termination? The moment it has no longer power to attract. When we are pure as the Christ is pure, when we are perfect as the Father is perfect, when we have gathered up all life's experiences, when we have tried everything and know the results and remember them, when having experienced along every line we know the results of all experiences, then desire for the transitory disappears, desire for all that is evil vanishes; we are free to choose; we no longer care for the transitory and the evil; we have risen above it for all ages to come; we have reached the peaceful strength that nothing may avail to change. That is the ending of sorrow and of evil, as ignorance was the cause of sorrow and evil alike; ignorance of what lay beneath the changing form, ignorance of the results that would come from the grasped object of desire; ignorance at every stage of our growth, but experience lifting us out of ignorance into knowledge and thereby out of sorrow into joy. The sorrow is so brief; the joy eternal. The lessons are so short, having learned them the wisdom is immortal. Does it seem long? Well, you are in the school learning the lesson. So does the school hour seem long to the child and he frets against the restraint of the school-house, against the discipline of the teacher, but if he were taken from it he would remain in ignorance in his manhood, useless as a citizen of the world.

Oh, if you could only catch a glimpse of the destiny that lies before you; if only your eyes for a moment could be opened to the unending reaches that lay before us and beyond; if you could see the proportion that exists between this life and the unending, these days of a moment and the ages of immortal existence! These lives that seem so long and burdensome are but the baby-hood of your life. You are passing through the troubles of baby-hood, of infancy, of childhood, and all those drop away and are forgotten when you reach your immortal youth which is yours at the end of this cycle of human evolution.

Only in the physical lies trouble. Only in the physical is sorrow. Only in the physical comes grief. The eternal that lies beyond you when this cycle is accomplished knows no trouble, no sorrow,

no grief, no pain. There evolution will carry you, these lessons once learned, along ever higher and higher paths where sorrow has no place. Here it is needed for the first development of the powers of the soul. When that is done you no more need sorrow and evil than you would need again to learn the alphabet in your manhood. You can read without going back to the primer of the child. Sorrow and evil are the things that are the alphabet of existence. Sorrow and evil are simply the primary lessons that the soul learns while in the kindergarten of life. All the later lessons, that alphabet being learned, come without needing to recall its letters save in memory; without having to learn them again in all the ages of eternity. Here is the school of sorrow and of pain; here the school in which those lessons are learned, beyond the life where the lessons shall be utilized, and where an eternal joy shall utterly out-balance the lessons of a passing pain. That is the message of all who know; that the partial realization of those who are learning now. Those who see the faces of the Masters know that for them all grief is ended, all sorrow is over, all evil lies below their feet. Where they stand, you and I will stand; and some day whither they climbed, you and I are climbing now. Their triumph is the promise of ours. Their victory is the guaranty of our success; and if I have put this strongly it is because I know it to be true. If I have spoken positively it is because I have seen that state of bliss and know it is reachable by man in his immortal vigor. That which they are we shall be. A messenger from them I come to speak to you the tidings to-day, tidings truly of great joy for all the nations of the world, for the day shall come when we shall be perfect as they are perfect, nay higher than that, where they and we together shall go on towards the perfection of Deity. That is the end of the passing sorrow; that is the fruit of the pain which is the seed to-day.

✓“If thou art filled with the dread of suffering, if there is naught agreeable to thee in suffering, do no evil thing openly or even in secret.”

THE RELIGIOUS MISSION OF THEOSOPHY.

(Continued from December number.)

✓ I am not now going to discuss the doctrine of the fall of man, except to state that in its orthodox, or exoteric sense, it has ceased to convey the spiritual or esoteric meaning underlying it. While theosophy recognizes and explains the true meaning, place and value of the great law of sacrifice, it has no hesitation in stating that the orthodox method of redemption through the vicarious atonement by the substitution of the innocent for the guilty in the person of Jesus Christ, is a sad travesty of the inner truth, and is responsible more than any other false doctrine for that which is so common among us,—the divorce of the life from the religious belief. The substitutionary theory is a contrivance for avoiding the results of conduct. Under the vicarious atonement theory the individual believer is taught that by the substitution of Christ, he receives remission of his sins, and salvation is presented as a free gift. Under this death-bed repentance theory a life of morality is not necessary to religion, faith and faith alone is considered necessary to obtain the soul's salvation. Any such doctrine as this paralyzes human effort; makes the individual believe that his soul's salvation lies in a source external to himself; and makes of Jesus Christ a barbarous, bloody sacrifice, bringing Christianity down to the level of the diabolical rites of the most benighted people.

Theosophy comes to assure man that no salvation can be found in any source external to himself; it comes to assure man that he himself is master of his own destiny; that the building of character and the acquirement of noble virtues is not the work of a day; that the grace of God cannot transform a villain immediatly into a saint through any mere sentimental consideration. It assures us that salvation of the soul means evolution of the soul into the perfect man, and this can only come as the result of patient, individual effort from day to day and from year to year, and from life to life.

"Yes, to this thought I hold with firm persistence,
The last result of wisdom stamped it true,
He only earns his freedom and existence,
Who daily conquers them anew."

The orthodox doctrine of election, which asserts that a certain portion of humanity is elected to salvation through no particular

merit of theirs, but simply through the arbitrary will or choice of a divine being, who bestows the gift of salvation on some while withholding it from others, thereby condemning them to everlasting misery, is too glaringly absurd to require at this late day any comment. It degrades the divine being in that it abolishes justice; it destroys the solidarity of the human race, and nullifies the great truth of the universal human brotherhood in that it divides the human race into two sections, places an eternal gulf between them, and gives to the one a salvation which the other is not to share. Theosophy holds to no such doctrine, but on the contrary asserts that the belief in human brotherhood demands as a first requisite that each and all shall have equal consideration in the great scheme of human evolution, and that when this is realized on earth, then the conditions will exist for a perfect human brotherhood in reality. The mission of theosophy is to inculcate in the hearts of men a profound conviction of the great truth that all men spring from the same spiritual fatherhood, the Supreme Atmâ, thus creating also a realization of the true spiritual brotherhood of man, and the absolute spiritual unity of the human race.

Consider now the grand solution theosophy gives theology regarding the true nature of the Christ. The doctrine of the Christ is the all important doctrine of theology to-day. In the whole of orthodox theology this is the only essential that now remains. During the last quarter of a century the number of non-essential doctrines of theology have been steadily increasing, and the number of essential doctrines gradually diminishing, until today the doctrine of the divinity of Christ is the only real essential that is left. This is considered to be the last stronghold that is left to orthodox christianity; it is around this doctrine that the great battles of modern thought are now waging. If the orthodox conception of this doctrine goes the way of all the others, then the last citadel of orthodoxy shall have been surrendered, the last line will be broken which separates the natural from the supernatural, and theology will be compelled to accept the theosophic interpretation, or surrender into the hands of absolute materialism. It therefore behooves orthodoxy to look well to its guns, and to summon the best brains it can gather.

Now, theosophy finds no fault with the conception of the divinity of Christ, provided it is understood what the Christ really and

truly means. Theosophy does not make an ecclesiastical doll out of Jesus Christ. The trouble with orthodoxy has always been that it adheres so strictly to the literal, dogmatic interpretation of the scriptures, and in refusing to see that the external form or symbol represents an inner esoteric truth, without which it utterly fails of any meaning. The whole of Swedenborg's theology is an attempt to restore to exoteric christianity the spiritual, or inner meaning to its doctrines or scriptures. In that remarkable book, "The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviours" by Kersey Graves, it is clearly shown that since about the year 1700 B. C., the world has had thirty-five saviours; and of these thirty-five, sixteen have been crucified. Through all the ages down to Jesus Christ, the various races and nations of the world have had their saviours, each saviour being as sacred to his particular nation or country as Jesus Christ is to the christians. The christian's Jesus is but one, the last, in a long succession of world saviours, extending downwards through history from the most remote time of which history gives us any trace. It is useless to ignore the results of modern research in this matter. Anyone who takes the trouble to study archaeology and religious history back into those remote ages, can ascertain for himself that which is now stated is absolutely true. The motto of theosophy is "There is no religion higher than truth," and we must learn to accept the truth, no matter how it may affect our false sentiments. A study of this interesting subject then discovers the fact that in the case of all these different saviours the same, or nearly the same miraculous occurrences occur in connection with them as we find in the case of Jesus Christ of the christians. The messianic prophecies, the prophecies of the figure of a serpent, the miraculous and immaculate conception, the virgin mothers and virgin born gods, the stars which point out the time and place of the saviour's births, the angels, shepherds and magi who visit the infant saviours, the 25th day of December as the date of the birth of all the saviours, the titles of the saviours as mediators, intercessors, etc, their royal descent, but humble birth, their salvation from destruction in infancy, the early proofs which they manifest of their divinity, their kingdoms not being of this world, their twelve apostles, the aphanasia or darkness at their crucifixion, their descent into hell, their resurrection and reappearance and ascension, and their atonement,—all these things

and characteristics, are, I say, common to nearly all the saviours of the various times and countries of the world.

We therefore see that all these so-called supernatural incidents in the life of Jesus Christ are not confined to Jesus Christ alone, but that they are common to all the saviours; and this being the case, there must be deeper meanings in these occurrences than orthodox christianity suspects. Orthodox christianity contends for the actual and literal fulfilment of all these things in the person of the historical Jesus. Its claim is that they were historical occurrences in the life of the historical Jesus, and the greatest efforts of orthodoxy have consisted in the endeavor to corroborate from profane history these so-called actual occurrences. Now, theosophy regards this matter from a vastly different standpoint. She lifts it from the plane of the materialistic interpretation of orthodoxy, and restores to it the profound spiritual meaning to the soul of man, which the true understanding of the Christ possesses; and it is only when this spiritual interpretation is understood that we can see that in all ages the truth has existed in the world; that the so-called heathens did not live in darkness; that there was no night of paganism which was lifted by christianity; but that, on the contrary, all the races and nations of the world possessed their great spiritual teachers and redeemers, who taught them the eternal truths of spiritual philosophy. We learn from a study of ancient mysteries that many of those ancient races possessed the most profound understanding of spiritual things; that in fact christianity is but an echo of far more ancient spiritual philosophy which came from the orient; that in fact all the great doctrines of christianity, except those of the devil and hell, are of so-called heathen or pagan origin. I say deliberately, and without fear of successful contradiction, that the whole of christianity, both the old testament and the new, from the first chapter of Genesis, to the last of Revelation, is of oriental and pagan origin; and that anyone who disputes this to-day does so only because he is ignorant of the results of modern investigation and scholarship.

Theosophy comes to tell us that Christ is no mere historical figure, that the name Christ, which in its philological significance, means "anointed," is a generic term, applied to all the saviours of the world,—that it represents a principal, the germ of which exists in every human being. It is the Christos principle of theos-

ophy; it is the higher spiritual Self of man. In Sanscrit, Kris means sacred and the Hindu Deity was named "Christna" (the pure or sacred) from that. The Greek "Christos" means anointed, etc. "In all languages, though, the synonym of the word, means pure or sacred essence; it is the first emanation from the invisible Godhead, manifesting itself tangibly in spirit. The Greek Logos, the Hebrew Messiah, the Latin Verbum, and the Hindu Virâj (the Son) are identically the same. The Christos or Christ principle then, is the ray from the divine; it is "the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This is the true meaning of the Christ, to which all investigations leads us, and it is this meaning alone which will enable the doctrine of the Christ to withstand the assaults of materialistic interpretation; for we see that with this meaning Christ is truly divine, and that Christ is indeed the Son of God. This is the true Logos, the Christos, who is anointed by the Great Breath, the One. Blavatsky says in the "Secret Doctrine" on this point: "Regarded in the light of the Logos, the christian saviour, like Christna, whether as man or Logos, may be said to have saved those who believed in the secret teachings from "eternal death," and to have conquered the kingdom of darkness or hell, as every initiate does. This is the human terrestrial form of the Initiates, and also because the Logos is Christos—that "principle" of our inner nature which develops in us into the spiritual ego—the Higher Self—formed of the indissoluble union of Buddhi, the sixth and the spiritual efflorescence of Manus, the fifth principle. The Logos is passive wisdom in heaven, and conscious, self-acting wisdom on earth we are taught. It is the marriage of the Heavenly Man with the Virgin of the world, or nature, as described by Pymander—the result of which is their progeny—Immortal Man. It is this which is called in St. John's revelation the marriage of the Lamb with his bride." Jesus said, "I and my father are one." This means that he had effected a complete union of his Manâs, or fifth principle with the higher principles referred to above. He also said: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," which clearly indicates that the only door of access to the spiritual father of man, the universal and supreme Atma, is through the Christos principle by effecting the union spoken of above.

With this understanding of the Christ as the higher principle

within us, we can see how it was possible for men in whom this principle had evolved into perfection, to be called Christs. They were indeed Christs, in that in them existed a perfectly evolved Christos principle; for this Christos principle—this Higher Self—is the reincarnating ego of theosophy, and when, by reincarnation this ego has evolved into the fully developed principle, then he who possesses that fully developed principle may well be called the Christ. In the Christs humanity reaches its flower and its fruit; and in them we see a type of that state to which we shall all attain when the goal of our evolution has been reached. It is only when we understand the Christ in this sense, as an eternal spiritual principle, that we can understand the true meaning of all the occurrences and characteristics of the Christs of history. All the incidents of their births, lives and deaths take on a new meaning. Their miraculous and immaculate conceptions, their virgin births and their representation as virgin-born gods, the date of their birth, their titles as mediators, intercessors etc., their royal descent but humble birth, the crucifixion and all its surroundings, their descent into hell, their resurrection, reappearance and ascension, all these things at once receive a new spiritual illumination and interpretation when understood in the theosophic sense. The spiritual principle takes upon itself the material vehicle, the lower nature, the Son of God becomes the Son of Man, the higher self,—the Atmâ-Buddhi-Manas,—is united to the lower self, consisting of the four lower principles of theosophy; the Son of Man, or the lower self is crucified; the lower self is sacrificed for the liberation of the higher self; this fearful struggle is represented by darkness at the crucifixion. The resurrection and ascension typifies the victory of the higher self and its liberation and triumph over the bonds of the lower nature. All these great esoteric truths were represented and taught to the initiates in the ancient mysteries of the pagans. It is only through the understanding of these great spiritual truths, as I have said, that the Christian Christ and the events in his life possess a meaning. It is difficult to attach any other meaning than the theosophic one to the expressions of St. Paul on this point. Among many other expressions, he uses the following: "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you." "O,

wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord." "But to everyone of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

It is true, that in the great majority of the human race the Christ principle still lies dormant, and to such it may be difficult to realize the abstract truth that the Christ is the spiritual principle within, which awaits development and evolution. Just as the simple mind of the savage cannot disconnect his mind from the material idol which he worships, so it is difficult for the simple and uneducated masses to realize that the Christ principle is independent of the man Christ Jesus. The early Christians of the first three centuries knew Jesus only as a man. It is Cyril, the Bishop of Alexandria,—that inhuman monster who murdered Hypatia—who deified Jesus; and this was done for the base and selfish purposes of the church.

This theosophic conception of the Christ, you will notice, throws a powerful side light upon the reincarnation of the soul. Orthodox theology has always claimed and represented that Christ existed from all eternity; and in support of this they quote Christ's saying in John XVII, V. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." As Christ, according to the eastern philosophy means the higher self, which is the reincarnating ego, which is the spiritual soul of every man, here then we have a statement of its pre-existence, which to my mind is of great importance.

Theosophy teaches the true doctrine of the trinity, and shows the fundamental origin of the trinities of all religions, including the Christian trinity. The theosophic trinity, however, is far removed from the anthropomorphic and degraded trinity of orthodoxy. The theosophic trinity is the pure trinity of the ancient wisdom, before it degenerated into the exoteric form of christianity. In its transition downward the christians have mutilated this doctrine into an absurd dogma, as much, if not more than, they have mutilated many of the other ancient doctrines. It is the mission of theosophy to restore to this grand truth its true inner meaning, bringing a light not only to religion, but to science and philoso-

phy as well in their doctrines of evolution.

Theosophy teaches that the universe is governed by a hierarchy of intelligences. It teaches that man is not the highest product of evolution, but that there extends from man upwards to the supreme spirit, a succession or series of great intelligences who preside over and govern the various departments of the universe. As Tolstoi says; "A man's religion is determined by the attitude of his mind toward the universe around him;" and if he believes the universe to be dead, or to be governed by natural law only, as science would have us suppose, then his heart becomes palsied and his religion mere formalism. Now, theosophy comes to humanity to fill the hearts of men with new life. It comes to tell man that the universe is not dead; that the fundamental forces in the universe are life and intelligence; that all evolution is pushed forward by these forces, and that no event whatever in the universe, be it small or great, occurs that is not produced by life and intelligence. Every leaf and every flower, every blade of grass and every mighty oak, every mountain and every valley, every strata that geology uncovers in the bowels of the earth, every storm and every calm, manifests the presence of the intelligent powers which guide and govern the universe. Nor is this any fetish idea; when properly comprehended, it is the greatest and the most inspiring truth which the wisdom religion possesses. These intelligences are intelligences who were once human, but who through evolution have advanced beyond the stage of ordinary humanity; they have in their evolutionary career advanced beyond the stage of our greatest philosophers. Notwithstanding their advanced state, these intelligences measured by the perfect intelligence of the Supreme, are still finite. This hierarchy of intelligences is indeed necessary in the evolutionary theory. If evolution has been operating through infinite past time, then is it rational to suppose that man is its highest product? There must, according to this law, be intelligences more advanced than man; and it would be presumption also to suppose that intelligences more advanced than man must necessarily possess material organs of bodies. Having, according to theosophy, worked out their Karma on this earth, it is not necessary for them to reincarnate on this earth plane. There are other earths in our planetary system, not so material as ours, and which are imperceptible by our

five senses, which these intelligences may inhabit, and from which they may operate. We think it is a great error of orthodoxy to suppose that the infinite and supreme spirit, which they call God, produces directly and superintends, every event, no matter how small or insignificant, which transpires in the universe. The absurdity of this idea is strikingly manifested by an analogy. Does the President of a great railroad system produce and superintend every event which transpires in his system, from the throwing of a switch to the signing of an agreement for the construction of a new railroad? No, certainly not. And so, theosophy believes that it is sacrilege and presumption to say that the infinite spirit of the universe is directly connected with the production of all the minor details and occurrences of the universe. Theosophy puts forward a far more rational theory, a theory of common sense, namely, that the infinite details of the universe are produced, operated and conducted under the auspices of intelligences, who, having been faithful in previous cycles of evolution, are now receiving their reward by advancement to more important duties in higher spheres. Jesus said: "Inasmuch as ye have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many." The faithful boy who enters a large establishment in its humblest and most obscure position, by perseverance and diligence, rises higher and higher, and is advanced to more and more important positions of trust and responsibility. And so in the infinite universe in which we exist, there are vast opportunities before us; there are great positions awaiting us, if by our faithful conduct and diligence we prove worthy. What is more natural to suppose than that the vast intellects of Newton and Laplace, who during their existence here, gave us the great mathematical laws of celestial mechanics, are now superintending some planetary system of the universe?

To show you how necessary this conception of an hierarchy of intelligences is, as supplementary to the evolution theory, and how theology will be compelled to accept this conception, I quote the following from that excellent work of James Freeman Clark: "Ten Great Religions." At page 212, part II, he says: "Some of the difficulties which we find in the actual constitution of things would be removed, if we accept another theory. This is the view that while God is the creator and preserver of the universe as a whole, he has permitted beings inferior to himself but vastly

superior to man to carry on the work of creation, in subordination to his own universal laws. In a previous chapter we have seen how probable it is that there is an immense hierarchy of intelligences extending upward from man to God. Some of these may possess such large wisdom, such resources of reason and insight, as to be able, by making use of God's law, to create races of plants and animals such as we see on earth. They would be creators under God, just as man is a creator under God." Then on page 220 he says: "What an immense gain it would be to substitute for the cold mechanical theories of evolution by dead force and blind law, a higher doctrine of evolution, which, while retaining every fact of science, should fill the world with spiritual life and energy. If, beside the Supreme Creator, there are also subordinate creators, we may conceive of them as still present in nature, still helping to reproduce its beauty and life, still visible in the tender coloring of the sky and graceful sweep of the elm, still audible in "the melodies of the woods and winds and waters." Gracious and fair were the divinities of the Greeks by the side of their fountains, and in the depths of their forests, but how much higher the conception, which, while filling all space with spiritual, ever active powers, still believes in God as the Alpha and Omega, first and last, whose fullness fills all in all, whose light inspires all intelligence, whose life is the animating principle of all being." Does not James Freeman Clark express here a great theosophic truth? Yes, not only does theosophy state that the universe is filled with an hierarchy of intelligences extending from man upwards to God, but it presents a vast philosophy and science on the subject, and explains who these intelligences are and their process of evolution to their grand position. Let us hope that theology will some day not far distant recognize this truth.

Still another great message which theosophy conveys to us is that all religions have a common source; that source is the Wisdom-Religion of antiquity. From that ancient wisdom-religion have come down through the ages all the religions which the world possesses to-day; and one of the greatest objects of theosophy is to point out to the various religions the identity of their fundamental doctrines in the esoteric truths which they are meant to convey. It will thus be seen that the theosophical society does not demand from any of its members that they shall neces-

sarily sever themselves from any church, of which they may be members. What theosophy seeks to do is to convey to the external symbols and doctrines of christianity a spiritual meaning and life, without which they are valueless to the soul. Just as a tree of natural history may represent the different varieties of a certain species and their relation to the main stem from which they spring, so theosophy is the tree of comparative religions, traces out every religion, showing its relation to all others and its connection with the main stem of the Wisdom-Religion of the immortal past. We can therefore see the vast nature of the mission which theosophy possesses to the modern world, and how great and profound are many of its problems. It calls our attention to the great sacred books of the east, showing us that the bible is not the only sacred book that exists; that indeed it is the youngest of the world's scriptures. There are great sacred books of far more ancient origin than the bible, books of which the bible indeed is but a mere echo; philology and archæology have proved that the bible had its origin in the far more ancient records of Chaldea and Egypt, which again had their source in still more ancient India. Great books exist which are not yet accessible to modern scholars, books which contain the deepest and most secret truths of man's origin and destiny, and which reveal the whole system of his evolution, and of the evolution of the universe in which he finds himself placed. It is commentaries on several stanzas from these great secret books which for the most part compose the body of the "Secret Doctrine" of Madam Blavatsky. These great books are in the custody of the elder brothers of humanity. These elder brothers of humanity are the masters, under whose auspices the theosophical movement is conducted. They are our Masters; their mission is to help forward the evolution of the race. They are the great friends of humanity. How consoling is the assurance that humanity possesses ever present helpers, who are full of compassion for our sufferings, and who are constantly sending forth spiritual energy by which the race may advance ever onward in its evolutionary career. Humanity is not left alone to struggle stranded on the apex of time. No, we feel the inspiring presence of those who have already scaled the heights, but who through supreme self-sacrifice have come back and are here to assist us in our upward efforts. And the

aspiring soul may commune with those Masters and receive knowledge and strength to climb the difficult path of initiation and advancement.

Theosophy teaches that there is no hell to which a man is condemned by any power external to himself; that the only hell which exists is the hell which he himself creates; it teaches that thoughts are things which are created by the mind, and that these thoughts exist for good or for evil in the astral world. One of the great principles which it inculcates therefore is the proper regulation of thought. By the thoughts which are sent forth, a thought body is built up, and this thought body is that which is the vehicle of Karma in this or in succeeding incarnations. Nothing happens according to chance; everything in the spiritual world, and in connection with our moral nature occurs according to laws which theosophy explains.

Theosophy seeks to develop the psychic powers lying latent in man's soul; it believes that there is now dawning in the more advanced portion of the race, a sixth sense, the psychic sense, a sense which will bring those who possess it into larger and more intimate relation with the higher planes of the universe, in which reside all spiritual life and activity. It lays down certain laws for the development of this sixth sense, so that every student may for himself verify many of the great truths which theosophy enunciates.

A cultivation of his psychic faculties enables man to demonstrate for himself the soul's immortality. Thus theosophy restores to man his lost faith in the immortality of the soul. It does not tell him about any vague indefinite something which will live a monotonous existence in some indefinite state after death of the body, but it gives him positive assurance of an unending life on the spiritual planes of the universe, which may become accessible to him while still in the bonds of the flesh. It can thus demonstrate immortality like a proposition in Euclid. It furnishes exact information of the regions of soul life after death. Several of the advanced students of the theosophical society are able to intremitt themselves on to those spiritual planes of the universe and to bring us back knowledge of the things which they have seen and experienced. In theosophy then, the yearnings of the heart for immortality find their fullest satisfaction in the contemplation of

unending activity, joy and usefulness in regions which lie beyond this earthly sphere.

It will thus be seen that theosophy is a vast system of spiritual philosophy, offering truths which may be understood by the simplest intellect, and laying down principles which may be adapted to everyday practical life. At the same time it supplies a philosophy worthy of the investigation and contemplation of the greatest intellects, a philosophy which conveys to science herself a key to her deepest problems. The fundamental undertones of the whole system are the great truths of reincarnation and Karma, and it is its mission to restore these great truths to the world.

To all who can no longer find in the old forms of faith that deep peace, hope and satisfaction, and that assurance of immortality which it is the mission of religion to give, I say, turn to the glorious light of theosophy; come to this fountain which gushes forth the great spiritual truths of the esoteric philosophy. Greater than all the other gifts of heaven to the nineteenth century; greater than all the sciences and arts of this wonderful age is the grand philosophy which theosophy brings us. This is the greatest gift of the ages to humanity. In this age of doubt, scepticism and despair; when the heart of humanity is well nigh sinking; in this age of fearful unrest, big with portentous issues which are calling for solution, theosophy comes and shows humanity "the truth, eternal and supreme, high seated upon its rock of adamant," far above the din and strife of social and political questions. That truth calls to us in a voice, "stronger than the voice of the mightiest thunder," and it is the duty of every seeker after truth to listen to and obey that voice as it speaks to us in the inner sanctuary of the heart.

TO THE OLD YEAR.

Thou too, Old Year, like mortals, shalt lie down
 Under the bulk of age, and sink beneath
 Dark void. Of thee the world will disenwreath
 Itself, and shed thee like a worn-out gown;
 And what thou art and hast been shall be known
 But by the little or much thou canst bequeath;
 And once made one with past time, which is death,
 Thou shalt forget man's being and thine own.
 Ah me! my soul is melting with a sigh
 That fain would voice the sum of all I feel;
 For in thy hand the withered wreath I spy
 That thou didst twine for me of peace and weal,
 Song, promise, dream, desire, resolve, which lie
 Dying with thee! Farewell! Fate sets his seal!

RICHARD T O'MALLEY.

In New York "Home Journal."

CORRESPONDENCE, CORELATION AND THE POWER OF THE SOUL OVER THE PHYSICAL BODY

Could we be in possession of a large glass globe this evening, and watch the process of first filling it with as many good size rocks as it would hold, then the packing of the interstices between with small pebbles, then between them the sifting down of sand, and to fill the vacancy still left by the pouring in of water we should still find room for air, for a current of electricity and its accompanying ether, without which it could not manifest, *ether* which surrounds and permeates every atom, molecule and cell of the mass, with its universal essence, and electricity, which is but ether of a certain quality and intensity of vibration, forcing a passage through the ether of another quality through which it travels.

Here in this supposed glass globe before us, we can readily distinguish the four palpable material substances which we know differ in nature and appearance, for the reason that each has a dominant key-note of vibration which differentiates it from everything else and therefore we will classify each as a sphere of its own; although we cannot see the current of electricity we know it is there by the effect produced, and we can understand that although imperceptible to our vision, it is a far more potent factor than the ponderable objects, rock, pebbles, etc., which it energizes; back of this we know by inference that there must be the eternal all-prevailing ether which contains the possibilities of all that is, and without which no manifestation could be, and lastly, if we think truly, we must postulate back of all a; the root and cause of all that is, the unknown X, to our present limitation, of an indeterminate equation.

Behold, in the globe before us then, the four ponderables perceived by us, the three imponderables only apprehended, and the simple solvent back of all, which must enter into the solution of every problem, simple or complex, which involves human knowledge. Here in this compact globe of interpenetrating substances, or more properly speaking but the one substance under different aspects surrounded by corresponding atmospheres, we have a crude representation of the chain of globes belonging to our planet, over three of which we have traversed; in the fourth we are still battling, the fifth is gradually impinging on our consciousness, while the sixth opens its shining portals to us from afar, as the realm of infinite Bliss and Wisdom of Love spontaneous and perfected, which indeed is the true Home of the Spiritual Soul. Here in this globular mass that we can touch, handle and hold, we have a symbol imperfect, as it may be, of the sum total of the objective, and to us, subjective realms of this green ball of Mother Earth, that swings us through the heavens on which we find the material necessary for our further unfoldment as a human soul, and which is destined to be our abode through succeeding lives, until we shall have culminated in ourselves all the possibilities she can afford us.

We as human souls, are the crowning effort of the planet on which we live, being the result not only of all the possibilities below us, but by virtue of having attained that state which could receive the impress of Divine Mind, we in spite of our drifting impulses from the true Ideal, image imperfectly the Divine Prototype of the Heavenly Man which is our destined goal, even as the glass globe with its dull colorless compounds, suggests that transcendent state of the Substance aspect of the Absolute of which it is potential, and which in the eternities of its growth it is destined to become. Each one of us is a human world within ourselves, and as this "Sorrowful Star" on which our pilgrimage is being accomplished, gyrates hourly, daily, yearly in her orbit around the center and source of her power, bearing ever with her globes actualized and potential, so do we involve, evolve and revolve, in a higher and partially at a self-conscious rate of vibration around the pivotal Center of all life, bearing within and without, around the cycle of experience, our five ensheathments, with the sixth in perspective, exactly corrolated to the globes of this planet, where we are destined to perfect our human experience.

As the warp and woof of an intricate fabric of a most complex design, the threads all differing in tone and arrangement, and each possessing a dominant characteristic of its own, and imparting of its nature to the whole; to illustrate, we will call one combination a shadowy violet gray, another opalescent, tinged with the rosiate, the others modified in color, but brilliant in aspect, that suggest to us successively gold, emerald, sapphire and amethyst formed by the blue mingling with the glowing radiance of the octave above all synthesized by that luminous harmony of tint—we cannot call it white light as we know white, because it is light effulgent, such as the poet has truly said never shone on earthly sea or shore;—if we can imagine such a combination as this, each division being capable of a distinct tracing and yet so interwoven and interblended that to disturb the orderly arrangement of any one of the constituents would be to change the relativity of the whole,—if we can imagine such a condition I say, then we can form a faint idea of this mysterious universe of Self and its veilings, and we can readily see that in order to harmoniously withdraw any set of threads from this texture, we must change the key note of the whole.

A number of physical means can be employed, and some of them are familiar in the practices of the fakirs of India, to temporarily release the soul from the gross body, and many in our western civilization are familiar with the theory of the Hatha Yoga methods by which this result may be accomplished. A specified way of protracted breathing accompanied by various postures of the body by which different nerve centers and their corresponding ethers may be effected by the process; frequent bathing and the external application of certain lotions, crystal gazing, the use of narcotics, and listless pacivity by means of which other centers of intelligence,

vibrating in unison with the corresponding centers of the individual, assist a temporary escape from the physical body are some of the means; *but all these practices are more than a temporary hindrance* to those who indulge in them, for they are not only frequently injurious to the physical body on which we are dependent for contact and experience, but most of all, a positive wrong to individual mental, moral and spiritual growth, the lamentable effects of which will be more intelligently weighed by us in future incarnations than at the present time. Such experimentation finds its complete analogy in an illustration couched in different language by more than one writer, that of a ruthless child, who fascinated by the brilliant novelty of some dangerous piece of machinery, unlocks the door to the engine room, sets in motion this wonderful combination, without power to stop or regulate it, without knowledge to utilize its energy, and then surveys his exploit with a shout of triumph, unconscious of the dangers he is encountering. Let us be warned by the simile and with all rightful aspiration to come in conscious relation with that Universal intelligence, which laves and surges against the shore of our consciousness but meets with no recognition, because we do not vibrate with it, bide our time by the Law of natural growth, working momently for the consummation of this great step onward. How? By cheerfully performing each day the duty of the hour however lowly may seem the task, according to our highest conception of right above expectation of reward, free from personal attachment to results; and by thus doing right for right's sake, without being swayed by approval or effected by disapproval we shall attain the highest expression of a truly moral character. For the transmuting of the lower forces of our nature, of changing the base metals as it were into the One Incorruptible Metal can only be accomplished by strenuous effort for the highest good of all, can only be gained by honest striving to be just and kind to all alike whether friend or foe, for thus alone can we be true to the Eternal Self and this is what the Law of Unity requires of us. When this equilibrium, mentally and morally is attained, like the threads of our fabrics which could be with safety removed, only by changing so to speak, the vibration of the mass, so when this right combination is intelligently manipulated by us, the fleshly bars of our prison house will as readily yield to the Key, or keys turned seven times, as the door of a fire-proof safe responds to the banker's touch.

When thus we have lifted the lower into the Higher, transmuted the Kamic into the Manasic, we shall then reign the Lord and Ruler enthroned in the 'Ether filled Chamber,' which we read of in esoteric writings, "in the heart of the Lotus," which means that ability to function in the Buddhic sphere of consciousness while yet in the physical body, and when as successful hierophants over all ensheathments, we shall learn to

correlate our states of consciousness to their corresponding planes in nature's kingdoms, we can draw forth her secrets for the common benefit of all humanity, while the abstract knowledge thus attained is amassed as soul-wisdom for each, whose goal to our present understanding is full Self-Consciousness, the perfected wisdom of the Spiritual Soul. Again, when the individual student has strangled the serpent of selfish ambition in his or her breast, that desire to appear greater than others, to gratify personal vanity, or for the sake of personal aggrandizement, but on the contrary is impelled by selfless motive to advance himself as a unit that he may help his brother man less advanced to achieve the same rightful conquests over the physical, then and only then can he safely practice step by step, to consciously withdraw himself first from external objects, then from the sensations of the etheric and astral bodies, still within and within, sphere after sphere, thus leaving the extremities, the periphery, then retiring from the organs, leaving these to be taken care of by the constituent life centers of each, still withdrawing and centering his consciousness within more and more, until finally he reaches the most interior nerve center which will reveal itself as the threshold of pursuit, and then veil after veil of its delicate structure will gradually roll back, until within its inmost chamber, material, yet so sublimated that it can only be spiritually discerned, he becomes conscious of that abode which is correlated to the true subtle body, and if the proper conditions be reached, through which it is able to function in conscious union with its Eternal Self, and knowing Self, it knows all things.

Now if we will try to understand how certain powers in the Kama-Manasic, (which at present is all we know of the mental body), have their correspondences in the differentiation of five senses in the etheric or mould body, which in turn have their corresponding organs in the physical instrument, we can see how this attenuated nerve force is directly correlated to the heart, the distributing center of life for the whole organism and which in turn, according to esoteric science, is correlated to the Self-attained so called sixth sense, or Buddhic consciousness.

The full attainment of this exalted Consciousness, can only be accomplished through unselfish devotion and knowledge, when all the products of the Lower Mind are offered a willing sacrifice on the altar of the Higher Self. This is the victorious achievement of the Great Masters, our Elder Brothers, who have renounced for this Manvantara the glories of their hardly earned inheritance, to assist our human family of to-day, whose individual members are the wayward, benighted children of their care and love.

In this great work for the guidance of humanity, they are able when occasion demands to withdraw to the "holy of holies" within, and closing the doors after them, consciously roll up this minute mental body as a scroll,

pass out and if necessary, build up a physical covering, or objectified form by polarizing and reducing etheric substance, gathered from the atmosphere, to a molecular rate of vibration, or else, remain in the subtle form, but lowering the vibrations of consciousness so as to contact the object in view; and thus to gather data on the Physical Plane, or to accomplish whatever purpose desired. It is safe in predicating however, that the higher function of the true Seer and Master, and that most frequently exercised, since a too frequent withdrawal from the body loosens the hold of the soul on its tenement, is to consciously retire to this "ether-filled" sanctuary within, which mortal eyes have never seen and the symphonies of which mortal ear has never heard, and then by thus regulating and co ordinating the vibrations of their several ensheathments, consciously, purposely and devoutly exercise that Omniscience and Omnipotence necessary for their untiring labor of love.

NELLIE E. DASHIELL.

LETTERS BY H. P. BLAVATSKY.

Extracts from a letter written by H. P. B. to the American Convention in 1888 and which applies with equal force to the American Theosophists in 1898.

"Theosophy has lately taken a new start in America, which marks the commencement of a new Cycle in the affairs of the Society in the West. The multiplication of local centers should be a foremost consideration in your mind, and each man should strive to be a center of work in himself. When his inner development has reached a certain point, he will naturally draw those with whom he is in contact, under the same influence; a nucleus will be formed, round which other people will gather, forming a center from which information and spiritual influence radicate, and towards which higher influences are directed.

But let no man set up a popery instead of Theosophy, as this would be suicidal and has ever ended most fatally. Since the Society was founded, a distinct change has come over the spirit of the age. Those who gave us commission to found the Society, foresaw this now rapidly growing wave of transcendental influence, following the other wave of mere phenomenalism.

Even the journals of Spiritualism are gradually eliminating the phenomena and wonders, to replace them with philosophy. The theosophical Society led the van of this movement; but although Theosophical ideas have entered into every development or form which awakening spiritually has assumed, yet Theosophy pure and simple, has still a severe battle to fight for recognition. The faint hearted have asked in all ages for signs and wonders, and when these failed to be granted, they refused to believe. Such are not those who will ever comprehend Theosophy pure and simple. But there are others among us who realize intuitively that the recognition of pure Theosophy—the philosophy of the rational explanation of

things, and not the tenets is of the most vital importance in the Society, inasmuch, as it alone can furnish the beacon light needed to guide humanity on its true path. This should never be forgotten, nor should the following fact be overlooked.

On the day when Theosophy will have accomplished its most holy and most important mission namely, to unite firmly a body of men of all nations in brotherly love, and bent on pure altruistic work, not on a labor with selfish motives, on that day only will Theosophy become higher than any nominal brotherhood of man. This will be a wonder and a miracle truly, for the realization of which, humanity is vainly waiting for the last eighteen centuries, and which every association has hitherto failed to accomplish.

According as people are prepared to receive it, so will new Theosophical teaching be given. But no more will be given than the world, on its present level of spirituality, can profit by. It depends on the spread of Theosophy—the assimilation of what has already been given, how much more will be revealed, and how soon.

It must be remembered that the Society was not founded as a nursery for forcing a supply of Occultists. It was intended to stem the current of materialism and to guide the spiritual awakening that has now begun, and not to pander to psychic craving, which are but another form of materialism. The tendency of modern civilization is a reaction towards a development of those qualities which conduce to the success in life, of man as animal in the struggle for animal existence. Theosophy seeks to develop the human nature in man, in addition to the animal, and at the sacrifice of the superfluous animality which modern life and materialistic teachings have developed, to a degree which is abnormal for the human being at this stage of his progress. Men cannot all be Occultists, but they can all be Theosophists. Many who have never heard of the Society are Theosophists without knowing it themselves, for the essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial, or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, good-will to all beings and perfect justice to others as to one's self are its chief features. He who teaches Theosophy, preaches the gospel of good will; and the converse of this is true also, he who preaches good will teaches Theosophy. I am confident that, when the real nature of Theosophy is understood, the prejudice against it, now so unfortunately prevalent, will die out.

Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind. We are the friends of all those who fight against drunkenness, against cruelty to animals, against injustice to women, against corruption in Society or in government, although we do not meddle in politics. We are the friends of those who exercise practical charity, who seek to lift a little of the tremendous weight of misery that is crushing down the poor. But, in our quality of Theosophists we cannot engage in any one of these great works in particular. As individuals we may do so, but as Theosophists we have a larger, more important and much more difficult work to do. People say that Theosophists should show what is in them, that the "tree is known by its fruit." Let them build dwellings for the poor, let them open soup kitchens etc., and the world will believe

there is something in Theosophy. These good people forget that Theosophists as such, are poor and that the founders themselves are poorer than any, and that one of them, at any rate the humble writer of these lines, has no property of her own, and has to work hard for her daily bread, whenever she finds time from her Theosophical duties.

The function of Theosophists is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice and generosity, attributes which belong specifically to the human kingdom and are natural to man, when he has developed the qualities of a human being. Theosophy teaches the animal man to be a human man, and when people have learned to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice and generosity will be done spontaneously by all."

"Yours ever, in the truth of the Great Cause we are working for."

H. P. Blavatsky.

THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE WORD ADEPT.

A subscriber asks for small space in your columns wherein to enter a mild protest against the use and abuse of the well known word "Adept," a name in frequent use among Theosophists. Standard dictionaries define the word to be "One fully skilled, or well versed in anything; thoroughly proficient;" and to more fully express the meaning Webster adds a line from Cowper, namely, "Beaus adept in everything profound." Now it is a fixed fact that one can be "proficient" with a trapeze, therefore an adept; another "well versed" in mathematics, hence, figuratively speaking, an adept; the third "well-skilled" in iniquity thereby takes on himself the rank of adeptship, and so on ad infinitum, without exception. The contention here is that the word has too wide a significance below the line to wisely applying it above the line, the line of high spiritual attainment, the sense in which Theosophists use it. But if some object to this as untenable and try to maintain that the term is as fitting in its higher application as is that of Master or Teacher, then let all insist upon its correct pronunciation. How often one hears from the platform, in lodge meetings and conversation the word "adepts" pronounced "ad-eps," thereby making a sad confusion of terms. One surely would not wish to refer to exalted Beings as animal fat, lard, etc. Let us go carefully into the unknown gathering the threads as we go, whether it be onto the plane of the superphysical or into the plain, simple philological.

A STUDENT.

T. S. ECHOES.

THE COUNTESS WACHTMEISTER'S MONTHLY LETTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF *Mercury*:

My stay in Boston now nearing its close has been a busy month indeed, five lectures under the auspices of the Procopeia Club, a very progressive organization, on Monday and Friday evenings have drawn appreciative audiences and favorable comments generally from the press. My lecture on "Vegetarianism

in the Light of Theosophy" received such cordial endorsement that at the close of my engagement a vegetarian dinner was given by the club, at which I was the guest of honor. This dinner was a charming one of six courses of delicious food scientifically prepared and most successfully demonstrated, the superiority and fitness of vegetables, fruits and grains for the food of thinking and intelligent men and women. Another dinner is proposed during the winter season, and plans are already being made towards the formation of a Vegetarian Society and Restaurant by members of prominent Bostonians. Speeches and a musical programs followed this dinner, but as I was looked for a parlor lecture at 8 P. M. in South Boston, I had to make my own little after dinner address before the close of the repast and with many apologies hastened to the meeting where a most appreciative audience of between thirty and forty people listened to my talk and then plied me with eager questions to a late hour. The three public lectures in Paine Memorial Hall have been well attended and reported, and have brought a number of callers and letters from persons interested to hear more of Theosophy. Through the generosity of Mr. Russell, Treasurer of the Branch here, a large hall in Roxbury was engaged where a free lecture was given to an attentive audience. The Psychomath, a Metaphysical and Emersonian Club of Waltham, invited me to lecture at one of their meetings, Mrs. Besant in a lecture given to them last summer, having aroused in them, a desire to hear more about the truths in Theosophy. One lecture was given in Lynn; here I had a small audience the weather being very stormy, but the next evening had a meeting with the Lynn members and talked over plans for the winter's work. Parlor meetings have followed each other in rapid succession both afternoons and evenings and have been productive of excellent results. In this connection I wish to mention the great kindness of Mrs. Bella Currier, in placing at my disposal her parlors at the Pelham Hotel in this city and in kindly assisting me in many ways in my work here. Mrs. Currier is an old time member of the T. S. and a most earnest student and advocate of the Philosophy, also due to her efforts, a parlor meeting was held at the residence of Mrs. Marion in Allston, where a most intellectual class of people assembled and much interest manifested and many books sold. Four successive talks in another suburb of the city, have resulted in the formation of a Branch of thoughtful and earnest students who are able to take up the studies at an advanced stage with full appreciation of their contents. Several new members joined the Alpha Branch and a few old members have left the ranks of the Secessionists to rejoin the Parent Society in fact I may add that the Rosebury Branch of the T. S. A. has practically returned for the former president, Mr. Charles R. Kendall, founder of the first Theosophical Society in Boston, resigned some months ago because of his sympathy with the present body. Many of the lay members have also resigned and their president Miss S. P. Coulburn tendered her resignation this week carrying other members with her and practically disrupting the Branch in its relationship to the Secessionists. Mrs. Bertha Sythes formerly Secretary of this Roxbury Branch quitted her post and membership during the visit of Mrs. Besant to this city. Mrs. Sythes is a most ardent and true worker for the cause of theosophy and has been in correspondence with nearly every Branch in America, she has now accepted the office of Secretary to the Alpha Branch and her zeal and energy combined with deep knowledge, the results of years of study of the S. D., render her a most valuable acquisition to the American Section. I have been the guest of Mrs. Sythes during my stay in Boston and much of the success of my visit here is due to her

unwearied efforts as also to her kind care of me. To-day, December 9th, I leave for Worcester where I hope to do some efficient work. The parlors of the Unitarian Church are open to me to-night through the kindness of the Pastor and to-morrow I lecture in Salisburg Hall.

CONSTANCE WACHTMEISTER

REPORTS OF BRANCHES.

CHICAGO, ILL.—At the annual meeting of the Chicago Branch held Wednesday evening, December first, reports were offered by various officers on the work accomplished during the twelve months just ended. The President's report embodied a brief history of the life and various crises and stages in the growth of the Chicago Branch. The Treasurer's and Secretary's report as also that of the Librarian showed the Branch to be on a firm, solid basis, with great promise for the coming year. After the offering of reports the election of officers took place. Mr. George E. Wright was elected to succeed himself as President; Dr. Elizabeth W. Chidester was elected to the Vice-Presidency and Mr. R. A. Burnett and Miss Isabel M. Stevens were elected to the offices of Treasurer and Secretary. Mr. W. C. Dougherty to that of Librarian. A new committee for Sunday work was appointed and we have started the Sunday afternoon meetings with fair success. Mrs. Edith Sears has lectured twice. On Sunday the nineteenth there will be a talk on Karma and reincarnation, and on the twenty-sixth Mrs. Sears will lecture on Christ and the Manger. I must say a word for the excellent work and the happy results that have been achieved by Dr. Mary Burnett. She has been west, that is in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas and Nebraska for several weeks and is now in Iowa. She has formed new branches, stirred up those that were partly extinct and given a helping hand to new ones lately formed by Mrs. Besant. Mrs. M. L. Brainard a member of the Shila Branch, has just returned from Chicago with most gratifying reports of her recent trip through northern Wisconsin, and so the work goes on. The year known as 'ninety-seven is almost over and a new one will be born to us very soon, and surely we may hope and strive to the uttermost to make it the very best of all the years we have had. This year has been filled with many blessings. We have weathered the storms that beset us and know that the T. S is fairly and safely launched. We must direct one fair craft wisely and stand each of us by the post assigned. We cannot all be first officers of this marvelous ship, freighted with such a precious cargo of truth, hope love and wisdom, but each of us can find some work to do. She must be kept very clean and bright, you know and she is very big; so must we all be busy and watchful. The Chicago Branch wishes all MERCURY'S readers "A Happy New Year"

P. G. K.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., Jan. 5th, 1898—During the month of December the Golden Gate Lodge has sustained its interest in a regular course of study, notwithstanding the attractions of the holiday season. The following Sunday evening public lectures have been given. "Question that Puzzle us," by Mrs. A. Best. "The Star of Bethlehem," by Miss M. A. Walsh. "The God Within," by Dr. Button. Symposium, "The Power of Thought" by members of the Lodge. On New Years evening the members of the Lodge received their friends at their headquarters. The library was artistically decorated with

smilax, oriental lights and rare potted plants. Dainty refreshments were served. Songs and loving words of New Years' greeting made the evening one to be remembered.

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 19th, 1897—The last four weeks has been a time of much profit and enjoyment to the members of Harmony Lodge T. S. and to all interested in Theosophical questions. Under the auspices of the lodge, Mr. Will C. Bailey of San Francisco, has been delivering a course of lectures on the following subjects; "Waves, Spirals and Vibrations," "The Growth of the Atom," "Relation of Sound, Color and Form," "The Three Waves of Creation," "Heredity" and "Theosophy and Christianity." Mr. Bailey will give two more lectures here the last one to be delivered December 26th, entitled "Whom did Jesus Worship?" Mr. Bailey has been as successful in his daily work of receiving interested inquirers as in his public lectures. A most enjoyable book social was held last week which provided more funds for the library. The annual election of officers takes place at the first meeting in January. H. R. Sec.

SEATTLE, WASH., Dec. 20.—Amanda Lodge has been in a very prosperous condition during the last two months. We have purchased more books for our library and donated literature to the Seattle Public Library at which place there is a great demand for Theosophical literature. Several parlor meetings have been held. Monthly meetings are held at the home of Mrs. Bush to study the theosophy of the poets. A most delightful evening was spent with Tennyson on December 13. Lectures were given on the following subjects: "The Fakirs of India," "Occult Forces," "Clerical Controversies and The New Revelation," "Social Reform in Relation to Theosophy," "Practical Theosophy," "The Second Object of the Society," "The Immortality of the Soul." The Lodge moved across the street into a more pleasant room and celebrated the event by holding a social in the new room. A delightful program of music, recitations and refreshments was prepared to which the members invited their friends. All united in acknowledging that Theosophist proved to be very delightful entertainers. The following officers were elected to serve during the ensuing year; President, Thos H. Barnes; Vice-President, James Clark; Recording Secretary, Mrs. Nettie Clark; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Harriet C. Stein; Treasurer, F. W. Wald; Ex. Committee, Wm. Haglund, Mrs. Harriet C. Stein, Mrs. Nellie Crawford, Alex Campbell. May the New Year prove a happy and prosperous one for the Society.

Harriet C. Stein, Sec'ty

NEWARK, N. J., Dec. 1897—The Countess Wachtmeister gave a lecture on Thursday evening, October 28th, at 792 Broad Street, subject "What is Theosophy." We had a very full house and very instructive lecture, she also gave a parlor talk the next morning at the home of Mr. Roberts, 475 Mt. Prospect Ave., which was also well attended. While in Newark the Countess was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Kluge. Our branch has taken the hall at 792 Broad St. for its weekly meetings which are held Sunday evenings, and hope by this venture to increase the membership. The Second Vegetarian dinner given by Mr. and Mrs. Kluge at 570 Hunterdon, on the evening of November 2nd, was a decided success and many surprises were in store for those present.

The table was in the shape of the Tau and was covered with white, the Tau being outlined with yellow. The center piece was a low basket with high a handle filled with grapes in all obtainable colors, the bunches being tied with ribbon in the seven prismatic colors, the handle with blue, representing the highest or spiritual life. Another emblem on the table was a seven pointed star six feet in circumference, representing the seven principals of man, each point being brought out in vegetables in its own respective colors. The menu was as follows; Potato pyramids garnished with parsley, stewed carrots, sauce blanche, wheat bread, celery, lettuce salad; baked hubbard squash, macaroni, cabbage salad with eggs, water cress, dessert, tapioca pudding, cranberry jelly, cake, grano coffee, green and red jelly, ribbon jelly, the napkins were yellow bordered with purple pansies. The first course was mental food consisting of an explanation by the host of the Tau and Star. Among those present was Mr. Thomas Organ of New York City, organizer of the N. Y. Vegetarian Society. Part of the program had to be omitted as so much time was taken up at the table.

CECIL H. A. KLUGE, Sec'y

PASADENA, Jan. 1st, 1898—Unity Lodge begins the New Year with the "Ancient Wisdom" for a text book, and the "Outlines of Study No. 7" as a guide to it. Mr. Sinnett's helpful volume, "The Growth of the soul" has been well studied, discussed and largely digested during the past months. Blackboard illustrations of the chapter on the system to which we belong," contributed by one of the students, aided greatly towards a comprehension of the scheme as outlined by the Author. Tuesday evening is set apart for study and Sunday for lectures. The members consider themselves fortunate in having secured Mr. James H. N. Lapsley of Los Angeles, as a regular lecturer before the Lodge on the first Sunday evening in every month. Mr. Will C. Bailey of San Francisco, delivered a fine lecture here in December on Waves, Spirals and Vibrations, with chart illustrations. Following this was an invitation to speak before the Independent Society, Rev. Mr. Webster, pastor, on "Christianity in relation to Theosophy." This address was singularly pleasing and elicited well deserved praise from both Mr. Webster and his people. At their next meeting Unity Members accorded Mr. Bailey a vote of thanks for the able interpretation, and kindly manner in which he presented the subject.

The propaganda fund, as instituted by Mr. Titus, is in active operation among us. The little boxes are regularly brought in to the first meeting of each month, placed together and contents sent to the General Secretary. May we not all, the coming year, dedicate ourselves anew to the work and extend our helpfulness to wider boundaries? As with a common heart, purpose and aim, strive to be worthy of our leaders, who spare not themselves but constantly work to spread the Truth and benefit all the race.

M.

WORCESTER, MASS. Dec. 15, 1897.—Saturday evening, December 11th, there was formed in Worcester, Mass., a Branch No. 56, otherwise known as the Wachusett Branch. This was the result of the successful visit of the Countess Wachtmeister to this city. She gave several lectures while here, one being in a Universalist Church, another in the Unitarian and still another in Salisburg Hall, besides several informal question and answer parlor talks at the home of Mrs. Emma H. Claffin, F. T. S., where she stayed and everywhere she was given an enthusiastic reception. As a beginning for the Branch, eleven names

were on the application for charter sent to Mr. Fullerton, two joining just after charter was sent. We have promise of a number more, as circumstances will permit them to come in and Worcester will have changed from a sluggish to a working city on Theosophical lines. The only officers elected as yet are the President, Chas. R. B. Chaffin Jr. and the Secretary, Edwin Elliot Blake. Countess Wachtmeister, before leaving the city, donated several dollars worth of books as a nucleus for a library, and thus has been launched in the stormy waters one more Theosophical life-boat to be buffeted and beaten by the changeable winds and to accomplish perhaps, a great work, who knows?

EDWIN ELLIOT BLAKE, Sec'y

NEW ZEALAND SECTION, Nov. 1897.—The resignation of Miss Edger, and the appointment of Mr. C. W. Sanders as General Secretary of the New Zealand Section, mark a new era in its history. And the previous one is appropriately closed by recording the feelings of esteem and affection entertained by the members of this Section for its first General Secretary, and their appreciation of her unceasing and unselfish work on its behalf. She has well earned our thanks and gratitude and wherever she may go, will be followed by good wishes and earnest thoughts for the enduring success of her future work. Auckland Branch held its Annual Meeting on November 2nd, and reports a fairly successful year. Mr. S. Stuart was elected president of the Branch, in the place of Mr. C. W. Sanders, and Mr. W. H. Draffin (Sarsfield St. Ponsonby, Auckland) was re-elected Secretary. At Woodville Branch, Mr. W. Nicholson has been elected President and Mrs. Gilbert, Woodlands, Napier Road, Secretary. The Branch has lately become more active, fresh interest has been aroused, and it is now on a much firmer footing. Fortnightly meetings will be held for study, and for the reading and discussion of papers. Dunedin and Christchurch Branches have both lately moved into more commodious and conveniently situated premises, and feel that time of greater activity and usefulness lies before them. The coming Convention is the chief interest at present in this Section.

AUSTRALASIAN SECTION, Dec. 6th, 1897.—The joint lecture tour undertaken by Miss Edger and Col. Olcott came to an end on November 10th when they both embarked for India. Miss Edger goes as delegate from the Australasian and New Zealand Section to the Anniversary Meeting of the T. S. at Adyar and it is expected will deliver the morning lectures usually given at that time and place. As a result of their five months lecturing and travelling, both in these colonies and New Zealand, we have to report so far as this Section is concerned, a much larger accession to our membership than has been the case in previous years, also the formation of one new Branch at Mt. David near Rockley, N. S. W., about two hundred miles from Sydney. All our other branches continue steadily along the lines of activity which have proved productive of the best results with us; that is, public lectures once or twice a week and classes for debate and study of the Theosophical teachings at regular intervals. When Miss Edger returns to Australia she will be by the unanimous desire of our Branches and those of the New Zealand Section begin work as Federal Lecturer and visitor of Branches, a task for which she is most eminently fitted.

H. A. WILSON, Ass't Sec.

BOMBAY, INDIA, Oct. 10.—Our lodge is doing well. Dr. Richardson who has renounced a fine position in England, to work for Theosophy and who has been in Bombay since the plague, has given us an impetus which is taken advantage of by most of our brothers here. Regular classes have been formed to read or study various books, and not a day passes without work of some kind. Readings, lectures and conversations are going on continually and as a result various Theosophical publications, in English as well as in the vernaculars, are in the press. The Adyar Convention is approaching near, and we hope some of us will be present there to hear Miss Lilian Edger, who is expected to come to India from Australia.

N. F. BILIMORIA.

ROME, ITALY.—The officers of the Rome Lodge for 1898 will be President, Signor Gualtiero Aureli, N. A. Roma, Via Babuino 51; Hon. Secretary, Signor Decio Calvari, Secretary to the Camera dei Dymtati, Roma; Treasurer, Signor Enrico Mannucci, M. A. Roma, Via Funari 20. These three gentlemen are all Romans "born and bred" and have proved themselves devoted Theosophists. Theosophy is therefore placed on a firm basis in Italy, and although it has more difficulties to face in Rome than perhaps in any other city in Europe, the membership of the Lodge is increasing steadily and its courage and perseverance will be augmented by the generous help and sympathy given by the London Headquarters and by other friends in Europe, and it is hoped that by means of its new organ "Teosopia" the "Glad Tidings may gradually be spread. This monthly journal will be issued by the Rome Lodge on January 1st 1898, with the motto taken from Dante's "Paradiso" Canto XXIV,

"Quest'e il principio, quest'e la favilla
Che si dilata in fiamma poi vivace."

(This is the beginning, this is the spark, which hereafter will expand into a living flame.)

An Almanac and Popular Practical Encyclopedia for 1898 has just been published at Florence, containing a clear and concise article on Theosophy, with an account of the aim and object of the Theosophical Society and of its progress in the present epoch, written for the publication by Decio Calvari at the special request of Professor Fumagalli.

BOOK REVIEWS.

The Theosophist, December,—Col. Olcott continues to be more than interesting in "Old Diary Leaves." This chapter tells the story of the birth of the Hermetic Society and introduces a brilliant company of scholars and literati. Mr. Mayers in his well written article, "Is Suffering a Necessity of Spiritual Development," takes up Mr. Leadbeater's recent protest against the idea that suffering is the condition of spiritual progress. Whether it is the only way or not, the fact remains that most of us do learn our lessons through suffering. In an article copied from *The Madras Mail*, Mr. Charles Johnson proves that Sanskrit is worthy of becoming the culture-language of the future. Two excellent branch papers "Theosophy in Brief," and "Heredity and Reincarnation," prove that good work is done in the lodges.

The Theosophical Review, Dec.—Contains an article by Mrs. Besant, "Man's Quest for God," which like everything she writes is most interesting. She says "it is not the object of worship but the attitude of the worshipper that rouses the emotions which stimulate spiritual growth." Mr. Mead shows in "Some Rejected Logia," that many of the best sayings of the Lord were left out of the New Testament. Mr. Bertram Keightly points out some very subtle dangers in his article on "Progress." Mr. Leadbeater relates a strange story of an astral murder. In "The Geometry of Nature," Mr. Glass summarizes the views of Señor Soria. In conclusion he says, "If it can be shown that combinations of the tetratredron in regular or semi-regular ways can be utilized in building up the known crystalline figures, a step will have been made which will go far to simplify many of the most puzzling phenomena and to give us a true geometry of Nature. The other articles are, "New Wine in Old Bottles" by Alexander Fullerton; "The Symbolism of the Gnostic Marcus," by G. R. S. Mead which is deeply interesting to the Theosophical student, "Incidents in the Life of St. Germain" is concluded. Mr. Ward continues his article "Concerning Intelligible Beauty," "The Age of the Vedas" by W. C. Ward.

The Vahan, December.—Enquirer deals with the questions of vital importance. Annie Besant answers:—“What was Christ according to esoteric teaching?” “What kind of Devachan was possible to a third round entity?” “Are will and desire synonymous terms indicating the action of the fourth principle (Kama) or are they separate principles? “Is Kama the cause of our forgetting the astral experiences we have during sleep?” “Can Theosophy remove the dread of death calls forth answers from S. M. S. and A. A. W. and N. Chattopadhyaya deals with the question of transmigration of the soul into animal forms.

Le Lotus Bleu, November.—This number opens with Annie Besant's admirable article on “The Work of the Theosophical Society.” Under the title “The Mental Plane” Guymot writes on the creative power of thought, “Where Begin” by Dr. Pascal. The continued articles are “The Devachanic Plane,” “Theosophic Glossary.” “Echoes from Theosophic World” states that an effort was made by M. Charbonnel, a priest of liberal views, to have a Congress of religions at the Paris Exposition of 1900 but that the effort found no supporters. M. Charbonnel has since resigned from the priesthood.

Theosophy in Australia. November.—The Outlook gives a long review of “Scientific Corroboration of Theosophy.” Showing a just appreciation of that important pamphlet by Dr. A. Marques. H. A. W. contributes a logical paper on “The Law of Causality.” We would like to see the names of the contributors to this monthly printed in the table of contents. Their omission is a mistake.

Intelligence, January.—“The Origin of Symbolism” by R. E. Moore is of interest to students. “Pythagoras and Being,” by C. H. A. Bjerregaard is a well written paper on the Pythagorean proposition that “all things are by number.” The serial story “The Empire of the invisibles,” is bright, original and entertaining.

The Temple, number eight is a fair discourse on Reincarnation by Paul Tyner who fails to understand Mrs. Besant and consequently calls her view "incomplete." Thoughts are creative forces on the physical, as well as on the mental plane.

Mind, January—This new monthly published in New York presents a very attractive appearance. The leading article is on the "Philosophy and Psychology of the Jains" by Virchow R. Gandhi. Julian Hawthorne's serial story "A Daughter of Love" is charming.

The Coming Light, December.—"Rays of Truth" have gathesed themselves together and grown into "The Coming Light." Never has a more loving passage been sent out to the "Orphan Humanity" than that which radiates from the pages of the December number of this beautiful little illustrated monthly.

THE FORUM DEPARTMENT.

Any person can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and short notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Be careful to write only on one side of the paper.

QUESTION CCCLXVII.

The seeming inequalities of human life are, according to the exponents of Karma, the results of previous lives; pleasure and pain in one incarnation being merely effects of causes generated in another. Animals, we are told, do not make Karma, yet we see them existing under similar diversified conditions, some starved and beaten, others pampered and admired.

In the case of human beings we submit to an inevitable law which bears the stamp of reason and justice, but how can we reconcile the sufferings of animals with the idea of a presiding intelligence whose chief attributes are mercy and justice?.

The above question though not vital, has a ring of brotherly love which will echo in many hearts. It relates to the conditions surrounding domestical animals which must form but a very small percentage of the immense families included in the animal kingdom, and the first step is to find the teaching about the evolution of the whole race of our speechless brothers. In S. D. Vol. II, page 272-273 we read; "The Occult Doctrine teaches a cyclic, never varying Law in Nature, acting in a uniform plan that prevails through the whole Manvantaric period and deals with the land-worn as it deals with Man—both are under the same Evolutionary Law. Furthermore, we are taught that the transformations through which man passed in the descending arc and those he is preparing to go through, are next in store for the anthropoid apes also; all those, at any rate, who have reached the remove next to man in this Round." The whole sec-

tion on "Physical Evolution," S. D. II, page 262, N. E., is illuminative of this subject and the fact that the apes are exceptions, that their egos "are entities compelled by their Karma to incarnate in the animal forms," seems to endorse the idea of difference of degree in the unindividualized animal kingdom. In applying this general law to specific cases we are helped by the following definition; S. D. Vol. III, page 574. "Brain-consciousness depends on the intensity of the light shed by the Higher Manas on the Lower, and the extent of affinity between the brain and this light. Brain-mind is conditioned by the responsiveness of the brain to this light; it is the field of consciousness of the Manas. The animal has the Monad and the Manas latent, but its brain cannot respond. All potentialities are there but are dormant."

The link between man and animals in their mutual emotional consciousness is very close, if it be true as H. P. B. says, "The Kama Rupa eventually breaks up and goes into animals. All red-blooded animals come from man. The cold-blooded are from the matter of the past." S. D. Vol. III page 580, and the key to the question lies in the words that meant as much to us as to the brutes. "Remember that Kama, while having bid passions and emotions, helps you to evolve by giving also the desire and impulse necessary for rising." Ibid page 570.

So that pleasure and pain act upon the whole animal kingdom, and make its astral body or body of feelings more active, more sensitive, in preparation for the awakening of the dormant mind, when this Kama must give the necessary impulse to evolution, millions of years hence. In the small proportion of animals which come into close contract with men, this natural progress is doubtless accelerated. If animals are built of cast off astral bodies, which explains the resemblance between certain people and certain beasts, a connection exists by which man is able to arouse somewhat the latent brain consciousness in the brute; and it is the fact that this education is accomplished through the astral medium of affection or fear, and this association usually results in suffering for the lower kingdom. It is a logical inference that thus inequalities of development in the wave of evolution now passing through brute forms must arise, and it suggests that these humanized animals would be the first examples of pioneers in the future humanity. Mrs. Besant once said that suffering was a development and gain to an animal, and that their training to service, as of horses and elephants, was particularly beneficial, while pampering tended to conceit and selfishness, and was therefore injurious. The whole question turns on the point where the mind becomes active and individual Karma results. An analogy exists in the teaching that only hereditary Karma touches the child before the seventh year, when Manas descends; and also in the racial Karma experienced in common by millions of human beings.

E. S.

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